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OREGON WRITER SAYS
NUCLEAR POWER NEAR

by Ray Stewart
UM Forestry Editor

MISSOULA, Mont.---

An Oregon science writer told University of Montana scientists, students, and interested townspeople that there was a nuclear power plant in their future.

Mrs. Marge Davenport, science editor for the Oregon Journal and wife of a Portland medical doctor, spoke in the first of a 10-week lecture series on water problems in the Pacific Northwest.

Based upon problems from earlier nuclear power installations, she advised that citizens should be certain any future nuclear power plants are located only after careful public consideration of safety and pollution factors.

Mrs. Davenport added that most of the problems of such installations result from lack of local governmental say and public controls on all levels.

The Atomic Energy Commission enforces "safe" operation, but has no say about thermal pollution, nuclear pollution or location.

"The utilities are selling the good features of nuclear power--this is called public education. They call thermal pollution, thermal enrichment."

However, she added, that no one is particularly to blame unless the rush to scientific advancement and the lag in communication between government and science is the cause.

She first became interested in thermal pollution and nuclear power plants when the Portland General Electric Co. announced it would construct such a plant 40 miles up the Columbia River from Portland.

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The company reported the proposed plant would not raise the temperature of the Columbia by more than 16 degrees of temperature--it estimated.

The Batelle report released early in 1968 proposed 26 nuclear power plants in the Pacific Northwest by 1990.

Mrs. Davenport said all of them dumping heated water in rivers could raise the temperature of the rivers above safe standards. Harmful bacteria increase and fish would die in warmer water.

The proposed Trojan plant was to produce one million kilowatts--three times the size of any existing nuclear power plant. Already the nation has accumulated 75 million gallons of nondisposable or radioactive waste from such power plants. What are we going to do with more of it?

The atomic age dawned on Japan in 1945; the uncontrolled nuclear energy was a bomb. Controlled nuclear energy produces heat. In the race to develop and produce, Mrs. Davenport said, the public safeguards may not always be economically feasible.

"A major public accident is entirely possible at one of these nuclear power plants, which the utilities always want to build near population centers--it has happened at three of them already." She also stated that there is no such thing as a safe limit of radioactive release. Radiation, irretrievable once let loose, is permanent pollution.

Mrs. Davenport said one way around thermal pollution of rivers is to cool by air, but the increased heat in an area of population can contribute to heat domes, hence smog.

Nuclear power generation is more costly than utilities first believed. They may turn to other alternatives. In the meanwhile, citizens might well consider the action of California, which is the only state that controls location of nuclear power plants.

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